

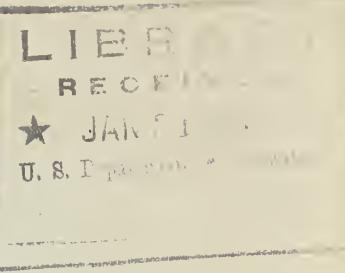
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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR



QUALITY IN BATH TOWELS

A radio talk by Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Tuesday, January 15, 1935.

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MR. SALISBURY: This being Tuesday, the third Tuesday of the first month of the year 1935, we're giving you another Household Calendar talk. Miss Van Deman, what's your theme today?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Something very practical. Something you probably had an argument about with your mother on Saturday nights when you were a small boy.

MR. SALISBURY: Must be the bath tub!

MISS VAN DEMAN: No, not quite, but the next thing to it. What's the first thing you use when you step out of the bath tub? You can buy it at the January white sales.

MR. SALISBURY: Oh, a bath towel, of course. By the way, does the Sultan of Turkey always use that kind after his turkish bath? Is that the reason they're called turkish towels?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Your guess is as good as anybody else's on how turkish towels got their name. I've consulted dictionaries and encyclopedias, and interviewed the textile experts. I couldn't find a scrap of information as to why turkish towels are called turkish. I have a hunch though it is because they proved the best kind for a rub-down after a turkish bath, because they're so soft and absorbent.

MR. SALISBURY: O. K. I'll just put it down as an old Turkish custom.

MISS VAN DEMAN: That's the idea. Have you ever seen any statistics on the turkish towel custom in the U. S. A?

MR. SALISBURY: Can't say I have.

MISS VAN DEMAN: In 1931 there were nearly 87 million square yards of terry cloth woven in this country. One mill alone turns out about half a million yards a year.

MR. SALISBURY: Well, it looks as though a small boy's chances to go unscrubbed on Saturday night were growing slimmer and slimmer. Civilization is closing in on him.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Sad, isn't it? But we all seem to have to be forced to it. As Mrs. Roosevelt remarked recently, all children have to be made to wash. They don't come by the bath habit naturally.

(over)

MR. SALISBURY: Well, coming back to bath towels, Miss Van Deman, I noticed you spoke of terry cloth. Is that another name for turkish toweling?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, terry cloth is the name for a cotton pile fabric woven with a series of tiny loops all over the surface. The word terry seems to be a corruption of the French verb tirer, meaning to draw or pull. In this connection, I suppose it refers to the terry attachment on a loom that holds one set of warp yarns tight and pushes another set of slack yarns up to make the little loops all over the surface of the fabric. In a good quality bath towel these loops are securely anchored in the foundation fabric. That's one of the first things to notice in buying bath towels - how closely these loops lie on the surface of the fabric and whether there's a good firm foundation fabric underneath them.

MR. SALISBURY: Test No. 1 for the quality of a bath towel.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Exactly.

MR. SALISBURY: Well, I can see that has something to do with how long the towel will wear, but has it any effect on the amount of water it will take up?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, everything. It's these close packed loops all over the surface of a towel that give it its power to absorb and hold moisture. The cotton yarns in these loops should be twisted just enough to make them wear well but not so much that the water doesn't soak into them easily. Margaret Hays is running a series of tests on bath towels down in our textile laboratories to find how quickly different ones will take up water.

MR. SALISBURY: To find how thirsty is a thirsty bath towel?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, that's it. You'll have to come over some day and see the ingenious apparatus she uses. You'll notice she puts one end of the samples of the toweling in a little pan of water and then keeps a record of the time it takes the water to creep up from point to point on the scale. She's tested samples of 37 different qualities of turkish towels to find how good they were in absorbing water. She's also tested their strength cross-wise and lengthwise, and she's noticed their selvages and their hems, and put the cotton itself through various chemical analyses.

MR. SALISBURY: Did she test them for color fastness too? I saw some the other day as green as the flag of Ireland.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Oh my yes, bath towels are very gay these days. So far Miss Hays has tested only white ones - either all white or white with a little color in the border. She called my attention to a very important point about color though. Some towels carry a line on the label underneath the manufacturer's name, stating that the color is fast. If you don't see this on the label, ask for a guarantee on colored bath towels.

MR. SALISBURY: What about size, Miss Van Deman? Did Miss Hays give you any tips that will help women buy bath towels big enough to please their husbands?

MISS VAN DEMAN: The difficulty about that is, some husbands seem to like 'em large and some like 'em small. But there are 4 standard sizes for turkish towels these days. The most popular one is 22 x 44 inches. The next larger is 24 x 48. Anything above that is a specialty. Those big bath sheets that some people like are nothing short of a luxury. They're expensive to buy and they cost extra if you're paying for your laundry by the pound.

It's rather a good idea to buy bath towels according to the size of the persons who're going to use them. Children, for instance, find it easier to manage the smaller sizes - 16 x 30 inches or 18 x 36.

MR. SALISBURY: Maybe if I'd had a small bath towel when I was a small boy that would have made a difference.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Has your haberdasher offered you any of the new kind made especially for men, woven with a thin strip to dry the ears with?

MR. SALISBURY: No, that a refinement that hasn't reached me yet.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Well, it sounds like one of those novelties that come and go almost before you can tell about them.

There's one other mark of quality in bath towels that it's well to check up on. That's the selvage. Examine the selvage closely. See whether all the threads are firmly bound in and there are no loose threads along the edge. Sometimes the first place a bath towel wears out is along the selvage.

MR. SALISBURY: Yes, when you take a bath towel by the corners and stretch it tight, that must be pretty hard on the selvage, as well as the rest of it.

MISS VAN DEMAN: And just one more point, Mr. Salisbury, and then I'm ready to sign off on the subject of buying bath towels. If the terry cloth weave goes all over the towel down to the very ends, then you get just that much more drying surface. Or to put it another way, if a bath towel has a wide, plain hem and border you lose that much drying area. It's the surface with the soft fluffy loops that gives a bath towel its power to absorb moisture.

MR. SALISBURY: Thank you, Miss Van Deman, for all this good information. If you keep on with these textile talks you'll have me an educated consumer one of these days.

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